

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MEETING OF ECE GROUP OF RAPORTEURS ON CONTAINER
TRANSPORT (GRCT)

1. INTERNATIONAL INTERMODAL TRANSPORT CONVENTION. MOST OF GRCT'S TIME WAS SPENT ON EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN PREPARATION FOR THE NOVEMBER MEETING OF THE UNCTAD PREPARATORY GROUP. THE US DEL STATED: (1) DESIRABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION FOR MULTIMODAL CARRIAGE; (2) NEED TO STUDY ISSUES AND THEREFORE APPRECIATION FOR EXTENSIVE UNCTAD DOCUMENTATION MADE AVAILABLE TO GRCT; (3) THAT GRCT COULD APPROPRIATELY EXPRESS WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN PREPARATORY STUDY; (4) IN VIEW OF VARYING POSITIONS EXPRESSED IN THE PAST BY STATES REPRESENTED IN GRCT A CONSENSUS WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH; (5) MOST RAPORTEURS HAD NOT RECEIVED THE UNCTAD DOCUMENTATION UNTIL ARRIVAL IN GENEVA AND THAT THE GRCT DISCUSSION SHOULD BE LIMITED TO EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

THE APPROACH OUTLINED BY THE US DEL PREVAILED AT THE MEETING. THE CHAIRMAN STATED THAT MOST STATES HAD NOT YET
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ESTABLISHED FIRM POSITIONS. HE MADE UNCTAD DOC. TD/B/AC.15/7

THE BASIS FOR THE GROUP DISCUSSION. MOST RAPORTEURS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS STATED THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR THE CONVENTION TO INCLUDE REGULATION OF PUBLIC LAW ISSUES SUCH AS LICENSING OF MTOS. IT WAS FELT THAT A CONVENTION WAS DESIRABLE BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE LIMITED TO DOCUMENTATION AND LIABILITY ISSUES. MOST DELEGATIONS EXPRESSED FLEXIBILITY ON ISSUE OF LIABILITY REGIME. THE NEED TO DEFINE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT IN THE CONVENTION WAS EMPHASIZED. MOST RAPORTEURS FELT THAT LDOS COULD CONTROL THE EXISTENCE OF MTO OPERATIONS WITHIN AND INTO THEIR COUNTRIES AND THAT THEIR FEARS OF THE POWER OF FOREIGN MTOS WERE EXAGGERATED. RAPORTEURS GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE NEED TO PROTECT THE MT DOCUMENT TO MAKE IT A TRUE THROUGH DOCUMENT ACCEPTED BY BANKS; THE EXISTENCE OF THROUGH RATES IS FELT BY SEVERAL RAPORTEURS TO BE A DESIRABLE ADDITION TO THE MT DOCUMENT. IT WAS FELT THAT THERE WAS NO NEED TO DEAL WITH CUSTOMS PROBLEMS IN THE MULTIMODAL CONVENTION.

THE PAPER INTRODUCED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS (TRANS/GE 24/GRCT/R.8) WAS REFERRED TO A WORKING GROUP WHERE IT BECAME APPARENT THAT OTHER DELS COULD NOT COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE NEGATIVE CONCLUSIONS OF THE DUTCH RAPORTEUR. THE WORKING GROUP (INCLUDING US RAPORTEUR) COULD NOT AGREE ON A CONSENSUS AND THE NETHERLANDS PAPER WILL BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING OF THE GRCT AND RAPORTEURS ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO THE SECRETARIAT. THE IMPACT OF CONTAINERIZATION ON INLAND TRANSPORT WILL THEREFORE BE ON THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT GRCT.

2. CONTAINER STANDARDS FOR INTERNATIONAL INTERMODAL TRANSPORT. THE US DEL EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE WORK ON CONTAINER STANDARDS DONE PRIVATELY THROUGH ISO. OTHER DELS FELT THAT THERE WAS LITTLE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL WORK ON STANDARDS. THE CHAIRMAN CONCLUDED THAT THE GRCT SHOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECE'S CONTRIBUTION TO UNCTAD'S WORK ON CONTAINER STANDARDS. THE WORK OF ISO AND THE APPROACHING ISO CONFERENCE IN TOKYO WERE DISCUSSED.

3. MARKING AND IDENTIFICATION OF CONTAINERS. THE GRCT AGREED THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR A UNIFORM IDENTIFICATION

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SYSTEM BUT THAT THE SELECTION OF A SYSTEM WAS NOT A MATTER OF GOVERNMENTAL DECISION; SUCH A DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY INDUSTRY. THE ISSUE REMAINS ON THE GRCT AGENDA.

4. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR SAFE CONTAINERS (CSC). THERE WAS A USEFUL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CSC. RAPORTEURS WERE INTERESTED IN THE US EFFORTS; OTHER STATES APPEAR TO BE EXPERIENCING SIMILAR

PROBLEM. AT US INSISTENCE THE SECRETARIAT'S DRAFT OF LONG
RANGE GRCT WORK PROJECTS WAS CHANGED FROM
"UNIFICATION" OF CSC IMPLEMENTATION TO EXCHANGE OF
VIEWS ON FUTURE CSC IMPLEMENTATION. DALE

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